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SUBJECT: CHINA ON U.S. PROPOSALS AT CITES COP 15

REF: A) STATE 6668 B) 09 STATE 125262

1. (U) Post relayed on February 2 the background information and points regarding U.S. proposals at the March 13-25 Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) contained in REF A to the CITES Management Authority Office of the China State Forestry Administration (SFA). On February 5, Deputy Director General MENG Xianlin provided the below written response.

2. (SBU) Begin text (edited for fluency):

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for the materials provided along with your fax of February 2, 2010--it is helpful to review the U.S. positions on relevant proposals before the COP.

We have done a preliminary review and also sent these materials to relevant wildlife authorities for further review.

Regarding the positions on certain species, please take the following general principles for your reference:

--China is in favor of comments and proposals from range countries in most cases. This will guide our decisionmaking on species like polar bears and bobcats. The polar bear's major threat is habitat loss and habitat quality, which is already reflected in your own explanation. Therefore the comments of large exporting countries and those with the healthiest wild populations must also be thoroughly examined and considered before we reach a final decision.

Regarding bobcats, we have indicated our general support for this proposal during frequent discussions in the past. Our final decision will be made based on the principle that CITES listings should be more related to the status of wild populations.

--For the shark proposal, we are concerned about several issues, including how "introduction from the sea" concerns would be addressed, identification problems for enforcement purposes, the difference between fisheries resources and terrestrial species, and also misleading information about the consumption of fins, which the proposal currently focuses on Asia.

--Regarding the coral proposal, we have not reached a consensus for our final position, which is currently being discussed with our colleagues in the Fisheries Bureau (under the Ministry of Agriculture).

--For CITES/COP 15, SFA's CITES Management Authority office will take the lead coordinating position. Generally, the Wildlife Conservation Department of the State Forestry Administration (SFA) will lead on terrestrial species and the Fisheries Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture will lead on aquatic species. Nonetheless, for all COP 15 issues, we prefer that you contact the CITES Management Authority of China (within SFA), which will deal with all inquiries according to internal procedures.

Thank you very much for the information and we look forward to seeing and working together with you in Qatar.

Best Regards,

(Mr.) MENG Xianlin  
Deputy Director General  
CITES Management Authority of China

END TEXT

13. (U) In addition, SFA's CITES Office indicated to ESTHOff that due to scheduling difficulties, the proposed digital video conference (DVC) involving Chinese authorities, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and State/OES/ENRC the week of February 22 would not be possible. SFA further stated that the background information provided in REF A, as well as the in-person consultation they had with OES/ENRC Officer Danielle Wood on January 20, now preclude the need for an in-depth bilateral discussion via DVC.

HUNTSMAN